GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2657
ANSWERED ON:15.12.2015
Conservation of Native Fish Species
Singh Shri Pashupati Nath

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the population of native and rare species of fish including Hump-backed Mahseer is on the decline;
(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
(c) whether the native and rare fishes including the Hump-backed Mahaseer are on the verge of extinction due to introduction of fishes developed through artificial breeding in the rivers;
(d) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto; and
(e) the steps being taken for conservation and protection of rare and endangered species of fish in the country?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

(SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR)

(a)& (b) Yes, Sir. The population of native and rare species of fish including Hump-backed Mahaseers are on the decline due to various natural and anthropogenic interferences like pollution, fishing pressure, poaching, habitat degradation and water abstraction.

(c) & (d) The surveys and studies conducted by Zoological Survey of India indicate that Deccan Mahaseer (Tor khudree) is distributed in central and peninsular India as well as in Sri Lanka and the Hump-backed Mahaseer (Tor mussullah or currently Hypselobarbusmussullah), endemic to the Western Ghats co-habits the peninsular Indian river systems (both the east and west flowing).

These species of Mahaseers are inhabitants of clear fast-flowing, montane streams and rivers, and are very sensitive to siltation, water pollution and other habitat changes. Both the Deccan and Hump-backed Mahaseers are rare fishes exhibiting a declining trend in their populations. Of these two species, the Hump-backed Mahaseer is the rarer one with very restricted distribution in their habitat range. However, sufficient scientific evidences are lacking to state that hump-backed Mahaseer fish is on the verge of extinction, especially due to the release of fishes developed by artificial breeding into the rivers.

(e) Among the native and rare riverine fishes from India only one species, Ganges Shark, Glyphis gangeticus (Muller & Henle) is under protection in Schedule I (Part II) of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and assessed as critically endangered in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. This species is endemic to the Ganges-Hooghly river system, West Bengal.

The habitats falling within the protected boundary of conservation areas like National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries and the wild fish populations in the aquatic systems therein, are protected under the law.

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